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THE

Commonweal

The Southern Moderate

Modest Proposals on the Segregation Issue

by Walker Percy

Moslem-Christian Dialogue

Report on an Extraordinary Conference

by James Kritzeck

GOODBYE, TEAMSTERS . . . . . John C. Cort
PRIVATE WORLDS . . . . . Richard Hayes
EASTWARD HO! . . . . . Philip T. Hartung
DINESEN'S STRANGE TALES . . . Edwin Kennebeck

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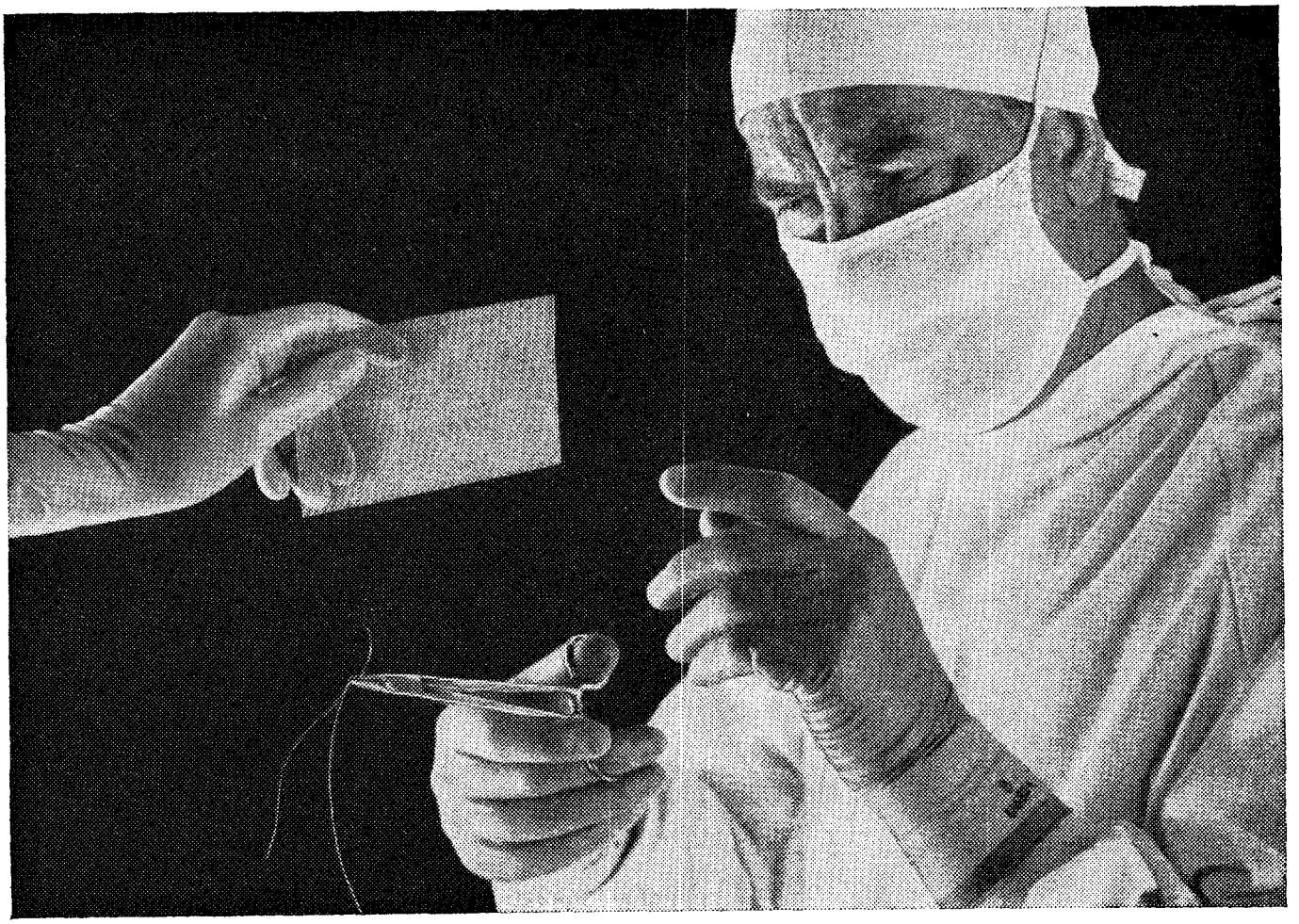

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THE
Commonweal
A Weekly Review of Public Affairs, Literature, and the Arts
THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR OF PUBLICATION

week by week

A MATTER OF VALUES

THE BELITTLING of Soviet accomplishments and self-justification that dominated official and press reactions to the space satellites have carried over into the discussion of the respective educational systems. Russian concentration on scientific education has long been well known, as well as the superior number of their annual crop of engineering graduates. Both factors appear to be getting the bulk of the attention when it comes to meeting the challenge.

According to these prescriptions the widening gap between American and Soviet proficiency can be narrowed and traversed through some concentrated effort. More and more American youngsters should be persuaded to go in for science. Scholarships to encourage talented students should be multiplied. Some thought should be given to raising the salaries of our science teachers—perhaps in a few key instances moving them part way toward the income bracket of some of our more successful football coaches. This country has the talent and the wherewithal; a modest shift in emphasis will do the trick, say many commentators.

The aplomb indicated by so calm a general reaction has proved impervious to the publication by the United States Office of Education of a two-year study of Soviet education, which comes to a number of disquieting conclusions. As a starter, it finds that the ten years of U.S.S.R. secondary education produces students who are better trained in academic subjects than the graduates of twelve years of American schooling. There are only seventeen in the average Russian high school class as compared with twenty-seven in this country. At present, Soviet secondary schools are graduating fifteen per cent more students every year than American secondary schools, while Soviet Russia has now reached a position to enroll twice as large a proportion of its population in universities as any Western nation. This disturbing catalogue could be extended considerably. But is it an empty Khrushchev boast that the Soviet Union expects to overcome the free world by means of the classroom?

A healthy realism would bow to the manifold evidence of the high quality of Soviet education, of its generally high scholastic standards. A listing of several of the grave difficulties now confronting Russian schools hardly warrants the New York *Times*' editorial reference to their "supposed excellence." Nor do such elements as their harsh and rigid discipline, the four hours' daily homework of Russian high school pupils, the ever-present political surveillance and the use of the schools as Communist indoctrination centers permit us to ignore their practical accomplishments. Their unwavering orientation and their operation at forced draft make these schools a very formidable weapon.

ONE OF THE illusions of Americans who would redress the balance by a little tinkering is that good science teaching, leading to all sorts of technical proficiencies, can flourish all by itself. They fail to see that it has to develop as an integral part of a better general educational framework. They fix their eyes on the numbers of engineers or the high percentage of Russian students specializing in science or mathematics; they appear to ignore the other academic requirements and achievements of postwar Soviet universities, colleges and secondary schools. They fail to realize that the new boarding school network, which is planned to enroll a million students by 1960, will make Soviet education an even more potent weapon.

At this stage of the argument the true dimensions of the problem should begin to emerge. Important as it is to bolster up the teaching of science and

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mathematics in this country, nothing would be adequate without a general raising of the American educational level. And we are called upon to do this despite a mighty series of obstacles. There is an unprecedented shortage of teachers and classroom facilities, and one that is steadily growing more and more acute. Part of the problem would yield to extraordinary appropriations for school construction—of which there are few signs. But how does a nation expand and improve its teaching force to the degree required overnight? Even with a new range of personal incentives this would be a matter of years.

Before such a development could be launched in any really serious fashion, there would have to be a revolution in the American sense of values—and here is the heart of the problem. If the lot of the secondary school teacher is to be substantially improved, for example, more than a big boost in his salary will be necessary. If he is to be attracted to, or retained in, teaching, he must not only have an income commensurate with what industry would pay, but he must also enjoy a standing in the community comparable to that of a teacher in Soviet Russia, or throughout Western Europe for that matter. If he is a university professor, he must often have in addition almost unlimited opportunities and facilities for original research.

How can such things come about in a land where "egghead" is a term of derision, even outside of politics—where youth is prized above wisdom, athletic proficiency over scholarly attainments, material success over achievements in research? To bring about such a change in outlook is the longest and hardest task of all. Catching up in the missiles race is child's play in comparison. And yet the freedoms we cherish and the values we hold most dear will remain in dire jeopardy as long as we allow life in America to drift along as before. To grasp the dimensions of the challenge must necessarily be the nation's first effort.

FABLE IN REVERSE

PRESIDENT Eisenhower suffered his heart attack late in 1955 while vacationing in Denver. Hours after the event, Mr. Eisenhower's physician told reporters that the President had suffered a "mild digestive upset." Only when Presidential Press Secretary James Hagerty arrived in Denver was complete and accurate information about the President's condition given to newsmen.

Last year Mr. Eisenhower suffered an acute re-

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Editor
EDWARD S. SKILLIN

Managing Editor
JAMES O'GARA

Associate Editors
JAMES FINN
RICHARD HORCHLER

Contributing Editors
JOHN C. CORT
ANNE FREMANTLE
PHILIP T. HARTUNG
RICHARD HAYES

JOHN BRUBAKER: *Advertising Manager*

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currence of the ileitis for which he had previously been treated. This time the press was told that the President had an "upset stomach and headache." A few hours later the President was on his way to the hospital to undergo major surgery.

At the outset of the President's most recent illness, while Mr. Hagerty was again absent, this time on official business in Paris, reporters were informed that the President had suffered a "chill." This diagnosis was reaffirmed in several subsequent conferences with the press. Only on the following day were White House reporters finally told that the doctors had the day before diagnosed the President's illness as a blockage of a small brain artery—what was later to be described as a "slight stroke."

Not much can be done about it at this point, but by now it should be obvious to everyone that such treatment of Presidential illnesses is very bad policy indeed. Perhaps if Mr. Hagerty had happened to be in Denver with the President the first time and in Washington this last time, things would have gone differently; misleading news bulletins might never have been issued. And in the case of the ileitis, it is at least possible that the gravity of the President's attack was not immediately determined and that the early announcement of an upset stomach was not a deliberate effort to deceive. But whatever the explanations that can be given for these incidents, the fact remains that there is little chance now of undoing the harm that has been done.

The boy in the famous fable who cried "Wolf!" too often found eventually that no one would listen to him when he really needed help. In this case the situation will be reversed. Optimistic reports on the President's health will be automatically discounted, and any report of the most trifling Presidential indisposition is likely to be taken by the press and the public as a harbinger of the worst. It is unfortunate, but true, that public confidence in official bulletins on the President's health has been seriously—and probably permanently—impaired.

SOCIAL, BUT NOT CIVIL

THE NATIONAL Interfraternity Council has unanimously approved a special report defending restricted membership practices. It is likely, therefore, that many fraternities across the country will continue to exclude various racial and religious groups, primarily Negroes, Catholics and Jews. In this, the fraternities can claim to mirror, in some degree, the biases which exist in our society at large.

Since over fifty colleges were reportedly "agitating" for the removal of the restrictions, a defense was called for. The fraternities, it was correctly stated, are voluntary social organizations. "Choosing of one's friends and associates is a social right which cannot be confused with civil rights."

This argument, correct if not compelling, overlooks the fact that most of the fraternities operate with the approval of the universities. Although many of the universities feel that the restrictive clauses violate those principles which the universities themselves uphold, they cannot, and of course should not, attempt to disband the fraternities. But they do have a right to withdraw their approval from the "social groups." They can see that such groups operate off-campus without affiliation with the university. This is what the discussion at the "agitating" universities centers on. Beyond this, one can ask if even "social groups" should not be sufficiently interested in civil rights to abandon an obviously bankrupt policy.

WORDS AND DEEDS

IN A SURPRISE announcement, Senator William E. Jenner of Indiana, ultra-conservative stalwart, has said that he will not seek re-election in 1958. He is, according to reports, "just tired of carrying on the fight for conservatism by himself." The news of his retirement—at least from national politics—has caused consternation among Indiana Republicans, and corresponding satisfaction among Democrats, both of whom look upon Mr. Jenner as the Republicans' strongest Senatorial candidate. But apart from the significance of his move in terms of the 1958 elections, the Senator's decision prompts a retrospective look at his career.

Mr. Jenner's chief claim to fame is, of course, his fierce anti-Communism. He is a member of the Republican Old Guard, an uncompromising isolationist and a bitter critic of "modern Republicanism," but he made the headlines chiefly, in company with his friend and ally the late Senator Joseph McCarthy, as an ever-vigilant enemy of Communism.

In 1951 Senator Jenner declared that the United States government was in the hands of a coterie "directed by agents of the Soviet Government," and called for the impeachment of President Truman. Senator Jenner was the one who said of General of the Army George C. Marshall that he was a "front man for traitors" and a "living lie." He said in 1953, when the Republican Administration

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took office, that they found "heaps of evidence of the stupidity, the corruption, even the treason of its predecessors." He rattled the sword for war on China, and was one of those who demanded that the forces of Chiang Kai-shek be "unleashed" for an assault on the Chinese mainland. As chairman of the Senate Internal Security Subcommittee, he spotted "Reds"—or, as he frequently lumped them together, "Communists, pinkos, eggheads"—in the government, the army, the teaching profession, the clergy, everywhere.

By his own words, Senator Jenner thought of little but the "Communist menace," but aside from his wild posturing and wilder statements, what did he contribute in the struggle against Communism?

He opposed the Marshall Plan, the single American effort which did most to prevent Communism from sweeping over a war-ravaged Europe, the plan devised, incidentally, by the man whose loyalty he shamefully attacked. He obstructed Administration attempts to build up United States military defenses and to strengthen other free nations with funds, arms, assistance of any kind. He railed against the free world alliances and would have left the United States to stand alone in the face of the Communist danger. On the basis of such a record, it would be hard to find an American who has rendered greater aid and comfort to international Communism than this man who luxuriates, incredibly, in a reputation as a valiant anti-Communist.

It is one of the most dizzyingly illogical facts of American political life that a politician can win popular identification as an anti-Communist patriot by means of such meaningless declarations of anti-Communism, while at the same time he urges political action which plays directly into Communist hands. Such a man may hit upon a known Communist or two—the buckshot technique guarantees this—but he directs his deadliest fire against the innocent. The people who in the war against Communism wish to substitute deeds for empty words, painful effort for easy attitudinizing, the people who are *working* anti-Communists, are often just the ones whose anti-Communism is impugned—with popular approval, much of the time—by such an "anti-Communist."

The use of logic is very often conspicuously absent in the direction of human affairs, and perhaps particularly in politics, but we may be permitted to hope that the madness of such "anti-Communism" is abating, that the retirement of Senator Jenner, one of the foremost of the verbal patriots, is a happy omen.

FOOTNOTE TO A QUOTATION

APPROXIMATELY two months ago The Commonweal and several other Catholic publications commented on the activities of Father Hugh Halton, O.P., the Catholic chaplain at Princeton University. We now read in the November 23rd issue of the Brooklyn *Tablet* that he says that these publications have wrongly attributed to him a quotation concerning M. Maritain. To support his position Father Halton said that "the only interview I granted in which the name of Dr. Maritain was introduced is on tape." He then quoted the interview as it appears on the tape, and though it is critical of M. Maritain, it does not contain the quotation.

Father Halton then said: "This is the verbatim report of the interview from which 'Commonweal,' 'America,' Mr. Donald McDonald . . . and others, I am told, drew the alleged quotation: 'Dr. Maritain does not have a very sound philosophical background.' The Aquinas Foundation will pay 'Commonweal,' 'America' and Mr. McDonald, $1,000 for evidence, suitable for a court, that I made such an assertion."

It would be impossible, of course, for several journals, acting independently, to draw the very same quotation from an interview in which it did not appear. We—and presumably the other journals—were quoting from a printed report on one of Father Halton's press conferences, in which the remark in question was ascribed to Father Halton as a direct quotation. The charge against M. Maritain was not inconsonant with the general tone of Father Halton's other criticism, but it was grave. One would think that anyone to whom such a statement was falsely attributed would immediately make every effort to set the record straight. Yet the editors of the newspaper in question inform us that Father Halton has never asked them for a retraction or correction. Nor did Father Halton send a correction to The Commonweal, which would have been pleased to print such a letter from him. Instead, after almost two months, Father Halton offers an award "for evidence, suitable for a court," that he made the statement.

For our part, we are still glad to pass on Father Halton's statement that he did not make the quotation attributed to him. And we agree with him on one point. The critical issues do not hinge upon a single quotation, but on the general tenor of his activities, rather strikingly indicated by the extraordinary manner in which he has offered his present denial.

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The Southern Moderate

"There usually comes a time when the moderate can state a few hard facts and make some modest proposals. Perhaps such a time is at hand."

by WALKER PERCY

TO THE MODERATE everywhere it must seem that important public issues are forever being corrupted by extremists. Such an issue was the matter of internal subversion after the war. The people were dismayed when conspiracy came to light and they were forced to recognize the fact that Americans in high places had betrayed their country. It was a necessary cause, the anti-Communism of the early fifties—something needed to be done and wasn't being done—even though it was open to demagogic exploitation. Overnight the situation polarized, with intemperate, flag-waving anti-Communists in one camp and anti-anti Communists in the other. The moderate was pulled left or right against his better judgment, or was stranded, speechless as usual, in the middle.

A similar fate has overtaken another good cause, States' Rights. Surely one of the pressing needs of the day is a strengthening of local government and a revival of local responsibility in the face of growing federal power and federal money. States' Rights is in the best tradition of both parties. Yet the cause has been so abused of late that it is in danger of being lost for good. The word is coming more and more to mean the right claimed by Citizens' Councils to deny a man something because of his race.

Yet there usually comes a time when the moderate can state a few hard facts and make some modest proposals. Perhaps such a time is at hand in the issue of segregration, judging from the caliber of men appointed to the Civil Rights Commission and from the generally favorable reception the appointments met with.

The Southern moderate, let us say, is a man of good will who is aware of the seriousness of the problem, is searching for a solution, but disagrees that the solution is simple and can be effected overnight. From the point of view of either Marvin Griffiin or the N.A.A.C.P., the solution is relatively simple. One sees it simply as a question of obeying the law, and failing this, of enforcing the law. The other sees it simply as a question of leaving to the states the rights guaranteed them by the Constitution, in short, of letting us alone.

WHAT THE N.A.A.C.P. doesn't realize, or will not admit, is that what it proposes is not possible. The entire U.S. Army could not enforce school integration in the South; the South would only close the schools. (The problem of the schools is, of course, the real impasse. The other problems, voting, buses, etc., are trivial by comparision.) All that would be accomplished is the destruction of the public school system. What the segregationist doesn't realize or doesn't admit to realizing is that racial segregation is increasingly intolerable as the twentieth century wears on. As an editorial in *America* pointed out, segregation is no wronger now than it was a hundred years ago, but times change and the same wrong may become more obvious and more hurtful. Racial segregation is more hurtful now in the time of world crisis and more demoralizing to Negroes and also, I believe, to whites in a time of heightened social consciousness. The moderate is aware both of the enormous difficulty of the problem and of the pressing need to do something about it. But the greatest need, to him, is the exercise of responsibility. What disturbs him is what he regards as the irresponsibility of both sides which has largely erased the hard-won gains of the past fifty years, the irresponsibility of a Faubus and the irresponsibility of those Northern politicians who, for the sake of the Negro vote, support any and every proposal of federal intervention.

Dr. Percy, who practices medicine in Louisiana, is a frequent contributor to this magazine.

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PERHAPS THE most serious consequence of the hardening of attitudes has been the waste of energies, with much of Northern liberal thought preoccupied with Southern intransigence and nearly all the best minds of the South enlisted in the defense. Instead of being constructively concerned with race questions, as the South was ten years ago, Southern brains are now committed to circumventing the Supreme Court and to cataloguing the failings of the North.

The quarrel has the nightmarish quality of a feud; the same old charges and countercharges have been revived in every dreary particular—with one difference. Rapid social changes are taking place which can only have the effect of radically altering the character of the problem, if not of solving it. Like most social changes, they are ambiguous. They may even be regarded as social evils, but they are evils from which good can come. Indeed, they hold out the first real promise of ridding the country of its greatest curse.

One change is the rapidly on-going emigration of the Negro from the South. What is taking place is not merely the national distribution of the Negro but the national distribution of the problem of racial injustice. For the first time the Gallup poll reports that the race question is now regarded as the number one American problem. This means, as I understand it, that the American dilemma is no longer what shall we do about the South, but what shall we do about the Negro. The change would seem at first sight to be only the spread of an evil and nothing to rejoice over—certainly the increasing racial difficulties of the North are a sorry comfort to the South—but paradoxically a great good can come of it. One can only imagine what reserves of energies and good will might be tapped, North and South, if at long last the problem were shared in common. It could even mean the beginning of the end of the two complementary American failings, the neurotic guilt of the South and the triumphant pharisaism of the North.

The country has been so long preoccupied with the wrangle that perhaps no one has an inkling of a future free of it, free, not of the problem, but of the sterile divisiveness in the face of the problem. The other night as my daughter was reading aloud from her fifth-grade history about Revolutionary times, I could not help wondering what it was like to live as a Virginian or Carolinian or New Yorker without the old bloody reflex, one arm ever upraised to strike or defend. It may be the suffering Negro himself who will save us all from what we have done to him.

THE OTHER change in progress is an economic one. As Harry Ashmore expressed it, a pattern is emerging in which the South will accommodate its dwindling Negro population as it moves from second- to first-class citizenship, a pattern which has nothing to do with the harsh words and extremist laws, which is imperfect but bids fair to be effective. Racial injustice is bad business. There is no segregation in the stores. Let us hope the Christian conscience will be decisive, but, failing this, let us be glad that for once the pocketbook is its ally.

These changes indicate possible areas of settlement; they also indicate social dangers which could make the cure worse than the disease. Perhaps the real role of the moderate is not to press for a quick solution but to humanize, to moderate, the solution which is surely coming.

First, let us not forget the stubborn fact that, whatever the shortcomings of the North, a man may sit where he pleases on the subway, attend the closest school; he may not always live where he pleases if he is a Negro, and he doesn't even know which hotels and restaurants he may enter. Nevertheless it is the *de jure* segregation of the South, and the sign *For White Only,* which the Negro must find increasingly humiliating. This being the case, and in the face of our present national embarrassment in world affairs, a cynical solution has been proposed. The obvious answer, the suggestion goes, is the Northern answer, *de jure* integration for the record and *de facto* segregation where it really counts. Even throw in the buses and drinking fountains; there are ways and means of zoning suburbs and school districts. The proposal is unmeriting. I mention it because it unwittingly provides clues to sociological realities which are usually overlooked in the heat of polemics and which, if examined closely, provide areas for real progress toward a settlement.

First, there is such a thing as a *de facto* segregation in the public schools of the North. It is partly racial but mostly ecological, a natural consequence, whatever the morality of it, of the economic organization of the city. Professor Frazier of Howard University suggests that if the South really wants to do something about *de jure* segregation, a knowledge of this state of affairs would go a long way toward countering the usual argument that desegregation would mean racial mixing. The fact is that even after integration the white schools would remain largely white and the colored schools largely colored.

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Secondly, it illustrates the nature of the Southern protest. Southerners are frankly concerned about the social and sexual consequences of integration. If, instead of scouting this fear as exaggerated or neurotic, one takes it at face value, one will discover that it reflects a very real social phenomenon in the South and that the fear is more or less appropriate to the phenomenon. This phenomenon is the peculiar social role which the public schools play in the life of the community.

But before making a proposal, let us first understand the gravity of the problem of school desegregation. Serious enough under the best conditions, it has become immeasurably more serious through a concurrence of bad luck, bad timing, and federal stupidity. Only such a combination, plus political irresponsibility, could have brought to pass a national disaster like Little Rock.

The difficulty of the school problem is the difficulty of any enforced cultural change. The bad luck is that the most important cultural change should be in the area of education where those exposed to the change are children. Even Southerners who believe the change to be ultimately for the best are disturbed about subjecting their children to a culturally retarded group, however temporary the lag. But worse luck, the group most affected must be the co-educational high school and junior high where the problem necessarily takes on a sexual coloration. The problem of co-education at this level is itself a moot one. That it should intersect with the racial problem is unfortunate to say the least. But the incredible bad luck is that the crisis of school integration should coincide with the crisis of juvenile morality and with the upturn of crime statistics among urban Negro populations.

But federal stupidity was the last straw. Of all possible educational levels, postgraduate, college, high school, junior high, grammar school, kindergarten, the Justice Department had to choose as the arena of its major test the co-educational high school with its full complement of explosive ingredients! As Walter Lippmann put it, this was the worst imaginable place to join the issue.

And all this at the most critical period of America's leadership in world affairs! Our enemies could not have done a better job of assembling our every fault into the ugliest possible façade for the world to see.

ONE HAS other regrets. It is perhaps a necessary evil that major changes have to be announced in an authoritative language that commands obedience. For unquestionably a great deal of the furor is engendered by words, or rather the space between word and deed which encourages myth. To give one example: I have seen white Catholics in Louisiana attend unsegregated barbecues and horse shows at "mission" churches and never think twice about it because no one advertised the affair as an "integrated horse show" —some of them Catholics who, when their Archbishop announced his intention of integrating the parochial schools, were bitterly opposed to mixing the races. The announcement of a change encourages all sorts of specters, in this case the specter of the abstract Negro delinquent put together from newspaper headlines.

Once we appreciate the seriousness of the impasse, however, it becomes possible to make realistic suggestions. A clue to the kind of settlement the situation calls for is to be found in the nature of the Southern protest. The opposition to integration of the schools is almost invariably expressed in social terms, social, that is, in the sense of personal intercourse. This protest stems from a sociological reality which is a characteristic of Southern life. This reality is the zone of social encounter. Anyone who has gone to school North and South knows what I mean. In the North the zone of obligatory social encounter usually stops at one's front door. A public high school is a place where one goes primarily to acquire certain services, just as the *A & P* is a place to acquire certain goods. One may, of course, make friends in school, have dates, but this is far more of an option, far more segregated, if you will, from the business at hand.

A public high school in the South is at least as social an institution as it is educational. The social body almost coincides with the student body. This is a particular manifestation of a more general phenomenon. The same social dimension includes as well the people upstairs, next door, the corner drugstore, and so on. The agreeable state of affairs in the South was made possible, of course, by the highly homogeneous character of the non-Negro population. Except for a few coastal areas and river ports it was and is white, Protestant, and Anglo-Saxon. The schools were never seen quite as public institutions, as the word is used in the rest of the country to mean a tax-supported service provided for any person at all. That is why so many Southern schools never had sororities and fraternities—the whole school was a white, Protestant, Anglo-Saxon fellowship. Nor is this said in criticism—on the contrary: the small town high school in the South is an extremely pleasant, humane, democratic institution.

Perhaps a similar distinction might be drawn between the small-town and big city schools of the North. I don't know but I doubt it.

THIS VERY phenomenon—and what is happening to it—may, like the economic changes Harry Ashmore talks about, suggest its own "solution." It is an ambiguous solution. It means the passing of a unique way of life. The change is inevitable but

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perhaps the loss is not. One hopes that the South's genius for graceful and humane relations between people may not be forgotten in the coming urbanization.

What must take place if we are ever to have interracial peace is a shrinkage of the zone of personal intercourse. No doubt it would be preferable to achieve racial accord by an implementing of Christian teachings. But if men do not wish to love one another then let them at least strive for neutrality. We must, for better or worse, see the public school for what it is, a public place, as public as a post office or a department store elevator. In spite of the physical intimacy of an elevator, the passengers do not feel they are sharing the same living space.

Once this happens, and once it is realized that desegregation does not necessarily mean a substantial mixing of the races, the greatest fear of the segregationist is removed—the fear of the necessary social, ergo sexual, encounter which, of course, is not being required of anyone. It is this difference in the social roles of the schools which leads to a major misunderstanding. The Northerner is mystified by the massive defiance of the South in this matter because to him there is no qualitive difference between sitting next to a person in the subway and sitting next to him in the classroom. For the Southerner it is very different. School integration means the lowering of two barriers, not one: the public and the social.

No doubt human brotherhood is better than a depersonalized society. But a depersonalized society is better than one threatened by violence.

The shrinkage of the social zone is already going on apace as the South becomes urbanized and suburbanized, along with the general convergence of all regions upon a way of life in which locales are more and more indistinguishable. Television, the automobile, the suburban home, the shopping center, are much the same the country over. We have heard a great deal about the growing anonymity of American life. Even a liberal Southerner cannot fail to regret the passing of an era of true intimacy between Negro and white and cannot help contrasting it with what he sees as somewhat shallow friendships between educated whites and Negroes.

Yet the growing depersonalization of Southern life may not be such a bad thing after all. God writes straight with crooked lines. If the shrinkage of social intercourse to patio and barbecue pit serves no other purpose, it might yet provide a truly public zone outside where people are free to move about in a kind of secure anonymity until the time comes when they might wish to be friends.

Moslem-Christian Dialogue

An account of an extraordinary conference that took place last summer in Morocco

by JAMES KRITZECK

TIOUMLILINE is the name of a spring, and of a narrow ridge its waters transect, high in the Middle Atlas mountains of Morocco. Panthers have been known to chase monkeys in the forests of cedars and pines on the mountains above; in the spacious valley below lies the town of Azrou. Almost equidistant from Tioumliline, seventy or eighty kilometers to the northwest and north respectively, are the royal city of Meknes and the sacred city of Fez. It is a country of strange and rapid contrasts. Veiled women ride motorcycles, and exorcisms are performed in front of hydroelectric plants. Nearby is a vista of jagged peaks capable of convincing one that he is on the moon; yet further on, towards Meknes, one encounters the trim, lush fields which nourish not only the best vineyards in Morocco, but also the cork-trees to go with them. It is a country, too, of Berber tribes, of spangled rugs and blue tattoos, of drums and fine leathers. It is a country, above all, of fervent Islam, of forbidden mosques and ragged holy men. It is an improbable place for a Benedictine monastery.

Five years ago, however, fifteen choir monks and five lay brothers from the Abbey of Encalcat in southern France, with Dom Denis Martin as their prior, settled on the ridge of Tioumliline. They came, as their brother Benedictines have come to countless other places on the earth during the past fifteen centuries, to pray and work. Occupying the single building

Mr. Kritzeck is a member of the Department of Oriental Studies at Princeton University.

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which had appropriated the commanding view of the valley below, the monks began their monastic routine and began at once to expand.

A Dutch lay brother, who likes to apologize for never having designed a skyscraper, is responsible for the unique architecture of the present monastery buildings, conceived entirely in the modern spirit. The simple local work in stone and mortar is suitable to the Benedictines and to the Moroccan scene, and is also artistically most satisfying. There are colored pools and flower-plots in odd geometric shapes all around the low-slung buildings, with Mondrian-like murals on the walls. The fat wooden crucifixes in the monastery chapel were painted by someone who sees the world like Jean Cocteau.

The monks of Tioumliline follow a strict observance of the Rule of St. Benedict. They are in fact a contemplative community, tonsured and completely silent. Their chief activities, after *opus Dei,* have been and are the works of mercy. When they built a small dispensary, they found themselves treating as many as two hundred Berbers each day. When the prior took pity on and adopted several Moroccan orphan boys, they found themselves running a school of languages and useful trades. They did not proselytize; they chose to make their presence felt merely by their humble services. The significance of this decision was not lost on the local Arabs and Berbers, who bestowed upon the monks a title in which they justly rejoice; "The monks," they said, "are true Moslems."

THE MONASTIC community grew to more than thirty and became, at the beginning of 1956, an independent priory. A less remarkable community might well have felt that it was doing all that it should and could do. It is only with considerable difficulty, however, that the outsider comes to learn what an entirely remarkable group of men they are; there are first-class scholars among them, talented artists and composers, and gifted translators. They are not the sort of men who would refuse even the heroic.

The particular mediatorial, pacifying tradition of Benedictinism had asserted itself at Tioumliline from the start. The monastery became a sanctuary for Independence (Istiqlaal) leaders, even fugitives. It became a refuge for Moslem students, especially those from the Qaraouine University at Fez, who welcomed the opportunity to quit the stifling alcoves and sunless streets of the cities for the peaceful freedom of Tioumliline. They came to study, to meditate, and to talk. When such an atmosphere grows up gradually and naturally, dialogue between Moslems and Christians is inevitable—a fact predicted by every great Christian thinker on Islam, but a fact which very, very few Christians have ever thought worth the testing.

So interesting and valuable were the extemporaneous discussions between Moslems and Christians at the monastery, particularly those during the difficult summer of 1955, that the monks decided to organize a conference for that very purpose the following summer. Centering around the general theme "The City," this conference compared Moslem and Christian concepts and circumstances. It was attended by more than a hundred students from nine countries, and by nearly forty lecturers from eight countries. Influential Moslem leaders were there, as well as two of the greatest theologians in the Church, Charles Journet of Fribourg and Jean Daniélou of Paris. The success of this gathering was such that Dom Denis undertook an extensive tour of the United States, Canada, and Europe during the following year to enlist support for and to plan another and more ambitious conference. The theme for this second conference, "Education," had been suggested by Morocco's Crown Prince, Moulay Hassan. The Sultan (now King), Mohammed V Ben Youssef, gave it his special patronage; so did the President of the Council, the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Education, the Governors and Super-Caids of various Moroccan districts, the Archbishop of Rabat, and the Ambassadors of France, Spain, and the United States. Held at Tioumliline from August 1 to 23 this past summer, the second conference is not likely to be forgotten by anyone who attended it.

THE FIRST THING that has to be said about the conference is that it was surely one of the strangest assemblies of human beings in the history of the world. There were nearly two hundred lecturers and students representing twenty-nine nationalities and six religions. But the naked statistics cannot do justice to the point. There was a Japanese who teaches philosophy in Germany, a Dutchman who teaches Spanish in Marrakesh, and a Spaniard who teaches music in Holland. There were poets, actresses, sociologists, theologians, photographers, seminarians, pharmacists, psychopathologists, and engineers. There were Belgians with Italian names, Arabs with English names, Germans with French names. There was a yellow-turbaned Moslem theologian from Fez who was actually a Frenchman, a folksinger in blue-jeans who was a priest, nuns who were Protestants, and a Persian from Harvard. There was an imam from a great mosque in Fez, the rector of the French College in Rome, and the son of the president of the World Zionist Organization. There were great Arabists and little Arabs. The representation from the United States ranged from the Ivy League and Fordham and Marquette to Batten, Barton, Durstine and Osborn. There was a unique collection of beards, of religious habits, and of oriental rites.

During the first conference there had been five lectures each day; the second settled for two, leaving

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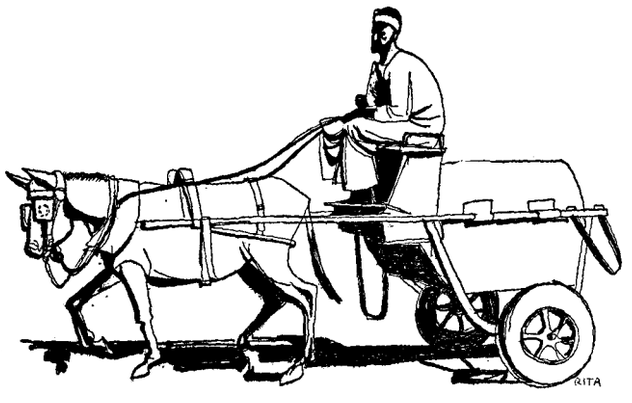
time for "sportive and cultural activities" in the afternoon, tea at five, "work seminars" before dinner, and entertainment later in the evening. Although political meetings were strictly forbidden, there were special groups for persons interested in such things as sociology, liturgy, and Flamenco dancing, and one was forever hearing the scores of the "clerics against the laymen" at volleyball and ping-pong. The "work seminars" were conducted in various languages by the lecturers, always on the special theme of the week; they were small enough to permit active participation by all the students, and presented summaries of their results to the plenary session at the close of each week. Films, folk-singing and -dancing, and theatrical offerings were the usual evening entertainments; one of the most successful of them was a comedy in Arabic presented by a group of actors from Marrakesh. The official languages of the conference were Arabic, French, and English; résumés of the lectures were sometimes, but not always, given in one of the other languages. In point of fact, of course, many languages were being spoken, and one occasionally had the feeling that no one was speaking his native tongue. Still, unaccountably, it was not Babel.

THE SPECIAL THEME of the first week was "Education, the perfecting of man toward the realization of his proper end." It was a week for theory, particularly on "man and education" according to the many philosophies and religions represented by the members of the conference. The second week's theme was "Education considered as an adaptation of man to certain historical and geographical circumstances." The towering figure of the second week, there can be no doubt, was Louis Massignon, professor at the Collège de France and dean of the world's Islamicists. His own lecture and seminars were not limited to a single facet of the problem, or even to a single culture, but extended, like his learning, over the entire range of time and space.

The final week was devoted to "Aspects and techniques of education in the twentieth century." Two formidable women captured the week: the King's daughter, Princess Lalla Aicha, who gave a controversial lecture on "The Emancipation of the Moroccan woman," and sari-clad Ika Paul-Pont of the International Youth Center in Paris, who lectured on "Social Education in India." After the closing session of the conference, the "sessionaires" were warmly received by King Mohammed, who expressed his personal satisfaction in the results of the conference, at the royal palace in Rabat.

It is perhaps unnecessary to call attention to the superb hospitality of the Benedictines, since that virtue has characterized them in all places and at all times. From the first reception in Casablanca to the final audience with the King in Rabat, however, the hospitality of the Moroccans themselves, and their kindness, generosity, and goodwill, were overwhelming. The high esteem in which the monks and the non-Moslem "sessionaires" were held by them was plain, too, for all to see. The King has often said that he hopes Morocco to be a kind of bridge between the Moslem and Christian worlds; obviously he means it. But more than that, he has a right to be proud of the manner in which his subjects have responded to his wishes by putting aside enmities and working for greater friendship with and understanding of other peoples. The Moroccan students at Tioumliline, for instance, were really the most impressive and attractive group of all. They had the initial advantage of feeling at home, but they employed it well to make fast friends of everyone. Very few members of the conference, I should think, were denied the delight of visiting a "typical" Moroccan home in Fez, Meknes, or elsewhere, and of sitting on outsized cushions, sipping mint tea, and learning for themselves the charm and vitality of young-old Morocco.

Everyone was agreed, in fact, that the personal contacts were the most valuable result of the conference. It is possible, in the space of three weeks, to make more than passing acquaintances, and that is precisely what happened. The education was mutual. The Moslems came to see Christianity in a new light, as they constantly affirmed, and the Christians came to see Islam for the first time in any light at all. One can only hope for more of such mutual education, and hope against hope for the necessary time for it to take place. Yet agreement and friendship were certainly not produced at the price of honesty. There was no duplicity—or even soft-pedaling—for the sake of any bogus harmony; where viewpoints had to clash, they clashed. But the *esprit de corps* of the camp, the refectory, the lecture-hall, and especially of the entertainments and excursions, was unbelievable. Dignity was thrown to the winds; people made friends, they enjoyed themselves, and they talked and talked and talked.



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IT IS NOT easy to criticize anything as uniquely worthy and important as the conference at Tioumliline. Still, it was not perfect. One was left wondering, for example, if the theme of the conference was at all adequately covered, and whether it was wholly suitable in the first place. Many of the lectures were dull; there was no end of repetition and vagueness. There was not a single professor of education (although some might consider that an advantage) at the conference.

It was sometimes, and in many ways, uncomfortable; yet no one seemed to mind too much, except once when petrol was (by mistake) put into the salad. For many of the "sessionaires" there seemed to be much else mixed into the high purposes set for the conference: tourism, photography, language-practice, and even romance. The Ciné-club endlessly explained the obvious; the many "folklorique" evenings began to get on everyone's nerves. Yet none of these things was in the least the fault either of the monks or of the Moroccans; they were the fault of the "sessionaires" themselves. Taken as a whole, the conference was a marvellous beginning, fully justifying the monks' hopes to make it an annual event.

The monks, strange to relate, went on about their duties seemingly oblivious to the bustle of the whole world at their window-panes. They did not break their silence; not a single *neum* was dropped from their chants. Only two monks were in evidence: Dom Placid, the secretary of the conference, and Dom Denis, the prior. Dom Denis was the greatest figure at the conference, bar none. He was unforgettable. Everything seemed to hinge on him, and yet he had time for everyone. His daily *Kaffeeklatsch* at the monastery was always a memorable occasion for those fortunate enough to be invited. He sat on the floor, talking wittily and wisely, deceptively Socratic, staggeringly intelligent. He was also the reminder, to those who needed reminding, that the achievement of the conference must be written down, first and foremost, to the grace of God.

There were many symbolic sights during the conference. Many seemed to prefer the morning at Goulmima when the Moslems bowed toward Mecca, a Jew in a prayer-shawl sought out his solitude, and a Dominican celebrated Mass in a ditch. I myself preferred another, similar, but I think more basically symbolic, sight: that of the Berber soldiers and women welcoming their Princess with clucking and whooping, while the poor monks of Tioumliline, grouped around an altar in the forest below, were welcoming their King in silence.

Goodbye, Teamsters

What is going to happen at the AFL-CIO convention has some of the inevitability of Greek tragedy

by JOHN C. CORT

THERE WILL be two texts for today's elocution: "I love that little fellow."—John F. English, secretary-treasurer of the Teamsters Union, speaking about James R. Hoffa.

"You give them wages and working conditions and they don't give a damn."—Sidney Brennan, international vice-president of the Teamsters Union, convicted of extortion.

If I had to go with one text, it would be Brennan's. For that one is basic. But the remark by English is also of crucial significance. For if there were any five words that wrung the neck of the decent elements in the Teamsters Union as they approached the Miami convention, they were precisely the above words spoken by John F. English.

You may remember that English was the man who was supposed to lead the decent elements in a crusade to clean up the Teamsters and cast the Becks and Hoffas into exterior darkness. As watch-dog of the treasury he had established a reputation for honesty and homespun candor. He had publicly criticized Dave Beck's use of union funds.

On the strength of these accomplishments the executive council of the AFL-CIO elected him a vice-president to fill the vacancy created by the unfrocking of Beck, after the latter had been exposed by the McClellan Committee as a man with exceedingly sticky fingers.

Upon his election English breathed new hope into some of us by openly declaring that the Teamsters

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would "wash their own dirty linen." As he took his seat on the council English told his fellow members, "You and the rest of American labor are going to be proud of us again." This was last May, and we are still waiting.

Although too old to run for the presidency himself, English was in an excellent position to back somebody like Tom Hickey of New York or Bill Lee of Chicago. But he held his peace as the months went by. The bystanders hoped he was waiting for the right moment. The right moment turned out to be several weeks before Miami when it became evident that Hoffa had put together a steamroller that would run right over the convention. At that point Honest John spoke out, "I don't care what anyone says about Jimmy Hoffa. I love that little fellow."

"Anyone," of course, included the AFL-CIO Council, which was then on the verge of convicting the Teamsters Union on seven counts of being "dominated or substantially influenced by corrupt influences," and of citing the activities of James Hoffa in four of these counts.

English's vote was the only one recorded in opposition to the Council's charges. He went on to Miami to back Hoffa all the way as the latter won the presidency by a count of 1208 to 453 (the latter being split between Lee and a diversionist named Haggerty). English announced that the AFL-CIO council, which he had said in May was going to be so proud of the Teamsters, "could all go straight to hell" if they didn't like it. He also sat by while the convention, in a beautiful gesture of defiant unrepentance, voted overwhelmingly to strike from the record the charges made by the AFL-CIO.

IT IS QUITE possible that if English had done what he was supposed to do, namely, organize the decent elements into an effective force in support of some respectable citizen, "that little fellow" would still have taken the convention and English would no longer be secretary-treasurer. On the other hand, it is hard to see how Hoffa could have beaten a united English-led opposition by more than 3-2. That would have meant that roughly three hundred votes would have separated the two factions, instead of the actual seven hundred fifty-five.

If only three hundred votes separated the Hoffa and anti-Hoffa forces, it would seem to me, a layman ignorant of such matters, that the courts could be more easily persuaded to grant the petition of the thirteen rank-and-file teamsters from New York, throw out the whole convention on the grounds of illegal election of delegates, and order elections of new delegates for another go at it.

And if only three hundred delegates separated the two factions (meaning a required shift of only one hundred fifty-one to give an anti-Hoffa candidate the presidency), it is likely that a new, court-ordered convention would have resulted in such a shift. In which case English could have been restored to the secretary-treasurership, the Teamsters could have proceeded to wash their own dirty linen, and the AFL-CIO Council and the rest of the American labor movement could have proceeded to be as proud of them as the very dickens.

Granted that this is a pretty "iffy" proposition. However, in our fascination with broad movements, tendencies, backgrounds, forces, etc., we too often, I think, underestimate the power of personal leadership in the old style. Hoffa supplied that kind of leadership, on the wrong side. English had the strategic position, and the popular following, to supply similar leadership on the side of the angels.

If the Teamsters finally wind up outside the AFL-CIO heading a new labor federation, as now seems more than likely, it will be as much the doing, or lack of doing, of Honest John English as it is of Jimmy Hoffa or any other man. Give credit where credit is due.

The court proceedings will undoubtedly take some time. In any case it would be impossible for the Teamsters to hold another convention before the AFL-CIO holds its own convention, the first since the merger in 1955, at Atlantic City, starting December 5.

What is going to happen there has some of the qualities of Greek tragedy—not the nobility perhaps, but certainly the quality of inexorable doom. The Teamsters will be thrown out of the AFL-CIO and will depart, breathing defiance and profanity.

This has been foreshadowed in the vote of the federation's executive council, which on October 24 ordered the Teamsters suspended by a count of twenty-five to four. English was one of the four; another was Maurice Hutcheson, president of the Carpenters' Union and himself under indictment for illegalities in Indiana; a third was Herman Winter, president emeritus of the Bakery and Confectionery Workers, a union which was placed under threat of suspension at the same session; and the fourth was William Doherty, president of the Letter Carriers, who actually seems to have been impartial.

WE CAN BE grateful to George Meany, I think, that the vote was as decisive as it was. Meany, impervious to the chorus of arguments revolving around the theme of "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone," has kept his eye on the main point, which is: whether sinless or sinful, the leaders of American labor are now required by their position to sit in judgment on the Teamsters. There are many reasons, mostly those of expediency, why they should look the other way. It is unfortunate that the only effective action they can take is expul-

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sion. This is a weakness in the AFL-CIO constitution. But this being so, it must take effective action or stand condemned as either 1) cowardly, or 2) tolerant of corruption, or 3) both. By their attitude of self-satisfied arrogance the Teamsters have left them no choice.

Following their expulsion the Teamsters may yet be forced by the courts to hold another convention. Sad to say, there is no assurance whatever that such a convention, composed of delegates elected legally, will not whoop it up for the little fellow all over again and thumb its collective nose just as brassily at the AFL-CIO.

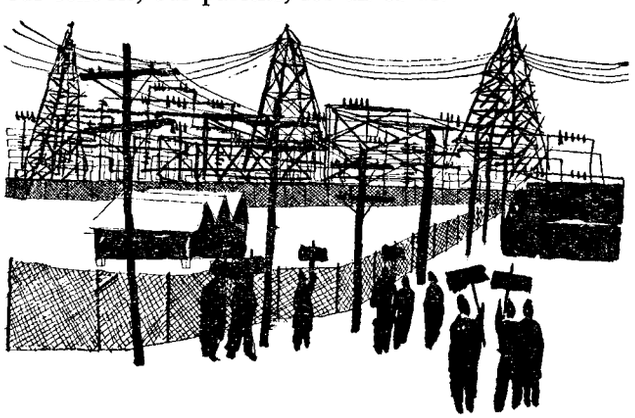
For here we come back to the deathless words of Brother Brennan, convicted extortionist and strike-breaker: "You give them wages and working conditions and they don't give a damn."

Hoffa has proven to the Teamsters that he can give them wages and working conditions. He has done it better than any other available leader. So what does it matter if he grabbed a little extra for himself? He produces for *us,* doesn't he?

And here indeed there is a sense in which we can rightly says, "Let him who is without sin among you cast the first stone." For isn't this philosophy a pretty common one among every class of Americans? I was glad to see that *Life,* in its series on crime in America, put its finger squarely on this same point, particularly in reference to the most respectable of businessmen: the contempt for the law, the convenient double standard of morality—the one for ourselves and the other for our neighbor.

It is also good to see that the McClellan Committee has also awakened at last to the possibilities of seaminess in the conduct of employers and has uncovered a rich lode of same in what one commentator has entitled "The Shefferman Shenanigans."

Let's face it: the corruption of which Hoffa and the Teamsters are now the most dramatic examples is something that runs deep throughout the whole American society. There is work here, not simply for labor or management or government, but for our churches, our schools, our parents, for all of us.



THE SCREEN

EASTWARD HO!

ANYONE WHO has read Truman Capote's interesting profile of Marlon Brando in the *New Yorker* may have some difficulty in taking seriously Brando's performance in "Sayonara." He plays an Air Force major who's sent away from the fighting in Korea in 1951 to Japan for a much-needed rest and, conveniently, to be with his fiancée. Since her father (Kent Smith) is a general and the major is a son of a general, strings have obviously been pulled; but the major, who is a West Point grad and a bigoted Southerner, is not averse to privilege. The reunion doesn't prove too happy in spite of the efforts of the girl's mother (Martha Scott). Romance between the intelligent, sensitive girl (nicely portrayed by Patricia Owens) and the thick-skinned major has chilled considerably; and while they enjoy sight-seeing together, that's about it.

The sight-seeing includes a visit to the Kabuki Theater where the audience is treated to a performance and the girl is attracted to the leading actor (Ricardo Montalban). This attraction develops into a friendship which could develop into love, but the film is mainly concerned with the major who has in the meantime been smitten with Japan's premier dancer, a member of a group of women dancers who are dedicated to their art and have almost nothing to do with the outside world.

Their ensuing romance is full of problems: the dancer (played with all the grace and beauty of a cold fish by Miiko Taka) has to get rid of her prejudices against Americans as well as her strong feelings of obligation to the dance group that has trained her for so many years; and the major has to straighten himself out with the Army (which is definitely against marriages with the former enemy) and with the bundle of prejudices and quirks that contribute so much to his own character.

Brando's portrayal in this important lead role is not entirely consistent. At first he plays the major in the old Brando style with Actor's Studio realism and spurts of mumbling made thicker by a Southern accent that is turned on and off. Unfortunately Producer William Goetz has made the first part of the picture much too long by including plenty of Japanese background; even though it has been beautifully photographed in Technicolor and Technirama and is fascinating in its cultural and artistic aspects, it drags the story out interminably.

As the character of the major changes under the influence of the love affair with this physically-attractive Japanese woman who is willing to sacrifice so

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much for him, Brando's acting changes. He becomes less stylized, more quiet and thoughtful. Perhaps this is what Director Joshua Logan had in mind to indicate the growth from petulant boy to man. But considering the short lapse of time for the Japanese interval, the great change is not too convincing in spite of Brando's magnificent portrayal of the new man in his later scenes.

Logan's ability as a movie director is much more pronounced in his handling of Red Buttons, who does his first serious film role in "Sayonara." He is excellent as the airman who throws rules and caution to the winds, marries his Japanese girl (played with great warmth and charm by Miyoshi Umeki), establishes a home and then sinks into complete despair when the Army orders him back to the States without his wife, who is pregnant.

Obviously the villains of "Sayonara" are the U.S. Army and racial prejudice. The good script that Paul Osborn wrote from James A. Michener's novel makes a strong case against both these villains and condemns American *and* Japanese intolerance. Perhaps the case would have been stronger, however, if the story had been more thoughtful and had not sunk to the soap opera level every now and then. In spite of the film's great and unnecessary length, Goetz' production is always handsome and Logan's direction, at least in the last half of the movie, should kick up quite an emotional response. For, departing radically from the book, the film has the major and the dancer move off in the warm glow together.

THE KIND of international goodwill that "Sayonara" aims at comes through well in "Escapade in Japan." Perhaps this is because kids are more direct in their dealings and sentiments than adults, and this pleasant little comedy seems to have no more lofty aims than to show two youngsters hitch-hiking across Japan. The boys are charmingly played by Jon Provost, as the seven-year-old American who's joining his parents in Tokyo, and Roger Nakagawa, as a nine-year-old Japanese who serves as his guide but leads him in the wrong direction. The suspenseful results are both amusing and educational (without getting preachy) as the boys become very good friends and have all kinds of adventures seeing the sights in parks, temples, museums and even in a burlesque theater and geisha house.

Producer-director Arthur Lubin also uses Technicolor and Technirama to show off Japan; he successfully incorporates the locales into the story and manages to keep the boys from getting too precious. By the time the frantic American parents (Teresa Wright and Cameron Mitchell) catch up with the youngsters on the roof of a five-story pagoda in Nara, the boys have convinced audiences that boys are pretty much the same the world over and life would be much simpler if everyone spoke the same language.

THE VISUALS in movies do speak a universal language. Except for the fact that it was made in Japan with a Japanese cast and has now been edited with English dubbed in by the King Brothers here, "Rodan" is very much like science-fiction thrillers everywhere. It tells a story of villagers and city folk being terrorized by giant insects and a pair of pterodactyls awakened from the depths by A-bombs. This is a theme with which science-fiction addicts are familiar through American films. Now through "Rodan," they can see a Japanese version—well-photographed in Technicolor and effectively executed with technical tricks, plus a moral that the hero brings up with authority when he hopes men will be as successful in eliminating monsters next time nature is disturbed by A-bombs.

PHILIP T. HARTUNG.

THE STAGE

PRIVATE WORLDS

MRS. CARSON McCULLERS inhabits a private world full of the shapes of grief; out of it she stares with large, panicked eyes, in whose depths we may yet discern the reflected images of a bizarre reality. It is this oblique authority of the terrible to which I respond in Mrs. McCullers; the surface texture of her work, on the contrary, has always seemed to me monochromatic, dusty and stunned. She is not, I think, an artist at ease with actuality. Her fable of the Southern waif searching for the "we" of "me" had pathetic power chiefly in its dramatization of fantasies: when Mrs. McCullers moved beyond that, she lost security, went prosy and distracted.

There is a comparable instability, though of a more radical penetration, in her new and original play "The Square Root of Wonderful" (*at the National*)—so coy a title, incidentally, in its blend of mathematical calculation and gush. She inscribes, across the blasted heath of a marriage, rather a cautionary tale of sexual susceptibility and humiliation and the somewhat desperate arrival at what I believe is grandly called psychological maturity. Desperate is indeed the word, for Mrs. McCullers' heroine moves into her new and "adult" alliance with relief rather than choice, just as she renounces an earlier, passionate, compulsive one not out of will or tragic wisdom, but exhaustion. I am not at all certain this is not the actual course of experience, at least in crises of emotional commit-

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ment and upheaval, but to render it esthetically is surely to insist on some definition and heightening of tone: if Mrs. McCullers wishes to impose a catastrophic reading on the theme, she has need more heavily to mark and dilate the note of *cost*. If, on the contrary, it is the rueful, bourgeois, social implacability of life catching one up, forcing one to a wry and graceful reason—if it is this she would embody (and I feel it implicit in her material), then Mrs. McCullers must include in her esthetic problem a richer ironic sense of manners and types, of the hard caprice and resilience of life, of a world in which pleasure, order, the probable and the possible finally—and not without kindness—call the tune.

This thematic confusion at the center of "The Square Root of Wonderful" radiates to its production, in which, obviously, no one has been willing to take the decisive hand. In that absence— and the presence of an intimidating décor vastly too prosaic for Mrs. McCullers' modulated gouache—the players adopt variously successful modes of what I shall call a mild Gothic realism. Miss Martine Bartlett brings hers off with most telling and perverse uniqueness: her eccentric is created with a shy power, and held at just the right distance for love. Miss Anne Baxter has an interesting, friendly presence as the heroine, yet I felt too assured a knowing in her performance: this role wants more muddle and generous satiric removal in its realization. In sum, there is a formal incoherence about "The Square Root of Wonderful" which disappoints; the play cannot be said to interest on the terms Mrs. McCullers obviously wished it should. Still, it issues from a sensibility which is genuine, however diffuse; it is full, too, of some wreckage of feeling. And it excels in a kind of mad, compulsive logic of wit, which I take to be peculiarly feminine and specifically Southern. It is a play not readily exhausted; always it holds something in reserve.

IN THE MATTER of Mr. William Saroyan's new play, I must record doubt that it could be more repulsive than it seems. That will be the extent of rational comment in this notice, for "The Cave Dwellers" (*at the Bijou*) quite roused me to something mutinous and raw: that state of jeering clamor, meanly savored, in which one would invoke any power to annihilate the offensive cause—here the insistent burble and belch of Mr. Saroyan's gaseous euphoria. Such responses, however malignant, are often taken as exhilarating by others more wiry and tough in their emotional rhetoric; myself, I am disabled by them. The only proper human activity, after all, is praise, and there can be little but pain in the contemplation of a flux of waste. Nor does anything in the history of experience, sentiment or art persuade me that "The Cave Dwellers" offers more: not a single motif in it has the secure flight and teeming riot of even indifferent things in "The Time of Your Life." Mr. Saroyan has long since hauled in the anchor which once bound him (tenuously) to this fruity earth he loves so wetly and with so much noise; he flaps about now in the inane blue, and with not too great an effort, you may hear him yawning, howling, yapping—but it is to a disembodied void *of* a disembodied void. There is no reality of fact or imagination in "The Cave Dwellers;" there is only the reality of Mr. Saroyan's temperament. Nor is there anything for tears here, because Mr. Saroyan has arrived, while yet in nature, at what he has always longed for and what he calls grace—the "eventual emancipation from matter." The totality with which this has been achieved is a Mephistophelean comment on the danger of human wishes.

RICHARD HAYES.

COMMUNICATIONS

HANUKKAH AND CHRISTMAS

Babylon, N. Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Throughout many school districts where there is a large Jewish population a problem of sorts has arisen concerning the dual celebration of Hanukkah and Christmas. It has long been the custom to mark the arrival of Christmas with carols and pageants of the Nativity. There are school plays and posters, pictures of the Virgin and Child, scenes of the coming of the Wise Men. We have taken all this for granted for many years as we are basically a Christian country. Recently we have been made to feel we don't have the whole show to ourselves.

In many new communities, groups of our Jewish neighbors feel they would like to have Hanukkah celebrated in the schools in much the same way as we celebrate Christmas. They argue quite logically that they are just as much American as we; they are, however, of a different faith. Are they to be deprived of the same rights we expect to exercise because they are in a minority? After all, if we can bring a religious element into a non-sectarian, tax-supported school, why can't they? The logic is all on their side, but unfortunately these problems are more often met with emotion than thought. Because of the almost inevitable clash between entrenched custom and innovation an unnecessary and unhealthy friction has been caused where none existed before.

Many zealous Christians, believing they are protecting their children from heretical doctrine, have been most militant in their efforts to ban Hanukkah from the schools. Regrettably, they have allowed their ideas occasionally to lead them into anti-Semitic attitudes

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and into a singularly unChristlike lack of charity in their remarks. They can be forgiven for their overearnestness, but can they be so easily absolved of their failure to see that their fight is no true fight at all?

The Jewish people wish to have the menorah, the seven-branch candlestick so often used as a symbol of their faith, along with other religious articles, on public display as a representation of this their Feast of Lights. They want them in evidence for the Jewish, and perhaps even for the Christian children, to remind them of this ancient Hebrew festival. It is hard to see what is so terrible about all this. What is this bogey man we are fighting so vigorously? Just what is Hanukkah?

In the second century before Christ the people of Israel fell under the oppressive heel of Antiochus, one of the Seleucid Kings, a successor to a share of the spoils of Alexander the Great. In an attempt to absorb more surely his new conquest, and no doubt from a pagan religious zeal, he sought by force to change the faith of the Jewish people.

Through their fear many reluctantly gave up their religion; others accepted death rather than worship the pagan gods; still others sought escape in flight.

And so there gathered in the hills small groups of men fleeing persecution two thousand years ago as they have so often fled since. One of these men was Mathathias, who with his sons, decided it was better to die bravely fighting, than to die bravely doing nothing. At his death he appointed his son, called Machabeus (the Hammer), to be the leader of the guerrilla forces he had formed around him. It is this obscure Machabeus who comes storming over the plains of Israel to rock the army of Antiochus back on its heels. The pagan altars are overturned and the people welcomed back to true worship of God. Jerusalem itself falls before the onslaught of the soldiers of the One God. The temple, the hallowed home of the Lord, is rededicated for holy sacrifice.

These stirring facts are recorded in the first four chapters of the First Book of Machabees, the next to the last book of the Old Testament. Oddly enough, not all Jews and Protestants accept the Books of Machabee as being canonical or inspired. The Catholic Church has been the only strong believer in these facts as the inspired word of God. Ironically, it is this holy war and memory that some are fighting.

It is not possible to divorce our Christian civilization from its Jewish background. Christianity does not spring full grown from a void, but is a fulfillment and completion of what once was the only true and divinely acceptable religion. It is over obvious to point out that Christ was a Jew and followed Jewish traditions. Anything which will inform us of this great past is to be desired, not shunned. This Jewish legacy is a beautiful thing and one which is part of our religio-historic heritage.

There is enough of difference in our religious beliefs to separate us from the Jews; there is no necessity for widening the gulf by foolish bigotry. The celebration of Hanukkah should be welcomed by all Christians as an opportunity to show loving understanding upon which is built mutual respect.

(*Rev.*) KENNETH J. MCCAFFREY.

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ROCKETS AND MISSILES

New York, N.Y.

TO THE EDITORS: Agreed that the United States has been dependent on many foreign scientists for important developments in research ("Moon We Never Made" by James B. Kelley, November 15), but let's dispel the myth that "Today in the United States the leading rocket experts are all Germans. . . ." The fine German group under von Braun has done most but not all of the *Army's ballistic* missile work through the Army Ballistic Missile Agency at Huntsville, Alabama. However, this group has nothing to do with the thirty-odd other U.S. rockets and missiles either developed or under development in the Air Force and Navy, including the Atlas and Titan I.C.B.M.'s.

JAMES J. HARFORD,
Executive Secretary,
American Rocket Society, Inc.

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NUCLEAR WAR AND THE THEOLOGIANS

A DISTINGUISHED group of scientists, political experts and theologians met in New York recently to discuss ethics and foreign policy, with special reference to the problems created by thermonuclear weapons. It was a very impressive gathering. Those of us who were fortunate enough to attend heard top medical scientists report on the fall-out effects of thermonuclear bombs; we heard leading political and military analysts discuss cold-war strategy; we were introduced to the wide range of opinion found among nuclear physicists, biologists, educators, journalists and men of affairs.

These experts were given the opportunity to listen to, and later question, a panel of theologians of different faiths. Among the religious leaders who participated were a leading Anglican bishop, a scholarly rabbi, an eminent Jesuit moralist, a thoughtful Quaker, and one of the leading lights of American Protestantism.

For the most part, what the theologians said was unexceptionable. But unfortunately it often seemed so remote from the terrible realities of the day as to appear almost irrelevant.

Some confined themselves to expressions of their genuine spiritual anguish and were frank to acknowledge a feeling of personal helplessness. Others enunciated moral indignation with great feeling and gave voice to their own spiritual aspirations for mankind. But what they contributed was hortatory at best and sheer rhetoric at worst.

The brilliant Protestant thinker, more than any of the others, revealed a sophisticated grasp of the real problem, but his wisdom was political rather than spiritual. He analyzed; he made no attempt to guide.

The Catholic theologian presented the traditional teaching on a just war. He talked of the difference between combatants and "innocents" in the usual way and concluded that it would be wholly unrealistic to regard the millions in Moscow or New York as "combatants" in order to justify the use of nuclear weapons. In what sounded like an echo from an old refectory controversy, he argued against the idea that the annihilation of New York or Moscow could be regarded as an unfortunate case of "double effect." Then, stating that while all Catholic theologians would agree with his principles some would surely challenge his conclusions, he concluded that the kind of war which means the nuclear destruction of whole cities, indeed whole countries, is out of the question. It would not be a "just war."

The terms of the "just war" argument, however, are largely without meaning. Those who insist on using them are reduced to stretching the original meaning of words until they stand for something quite different from what they once meant. When the argument was devised, a "combatant" was a man who fought another combatant; an "innocent" was someone who got in the way. War was army against army. Now war is people versus people. "Combatants" a thousand miles away from the enemy push buttons that mean the death of millions of "innocents." And this is no "effect"; this is what war *is*.

The "double effect" argument originally made realistic sense—if you had to injure a dozen or even a hundred "innocents" in order to achieve a military goal, you could do so without moral guilt. To argue now that you are destroying Brooklyn only in order to sink a ship in the harbor is to play with words.

The Catholic theologian at the meeting I attended argued on these traditional terms and came to conclusions that practically, if not theoretically, would result in pacifism. Actually his proposal was very radical but it rolled off the backs of everybody who heard it as easily as it rolled off his own tongue. No one seemed to treat it seriously.

I wondered why, and I came to the conclusion that the problem he spoke of is not the moral problem that actually faces our political and military leaders.

They know, for instance, that the Russians would take full advantage of the situation if we announced we would not use nuclear weapons. The mere announcement of such a "moral" position would probably result in incalculable evil. By the same token they know that if we keep up the arms race Armaggedon is a very real possibility. What to do? They feel trapped in this moral dilemma. They are trying to find a way out. Talk about the traditional criteria for a just war—when the nature of war has so changed that it almost requires another word—strikes them as being irrelevant. It is not that they are wicked or deaf to moral teaching. The problem is that no one comes forth with the moral principles that will resolve their dilemma.

They have responsibility for millions of lives and possibly for the very future of mankind. The problem is not so much one of individual responsibility for a personal act as their general responsibility for political acts that will affect—maybe even destroy—all mankind. They face a responsibility not only to their own consciences but to the future of the race.

I do not believe that even the best theologians have yet begun to deal with the realities these men face. Perhaps that is why they receive the advice of theologians so coolly.

JOHN COGLEY.

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Strange Tales, Marvelously Told

LAST TALES. By Isak Dinesen. Random House. $4.

By EDWIN KENNBECK

WHATEVER IT IS that Isak Dinesen does in her tales, she often does it marvelously well. It is a strange art, bold and perilous; it is in some ways highly artificial, compounded partly of impersonality and a formal, conscious tact. It is almost completely without humor—that is to say, it generally contains nothing to laugh at. But it is not evidently the work of a somber or humorless personality, nor of a narrow one.

The tales of Isak Dinesen that are successful are impenetrable and baffling—not indeed in the sense suggested by one critic, who found that Isak Dinesen too often leaves her readers guessing, but in the sense that they do achieve something—a genuine density, a completion—that is difficult to name. In "The Cloak" it is a tantalizing question whether Leonidas the sculptor has learned that his wife has been unfaithful, and it is true that we are never told the answer. But the question recedes as the tale comes to an end; the weight of the story lies on the head of the lady's lover. *He* does not know whether her husband has found out, and that is the story. In another tale there is a question of which of a pair of twin boys has been saved from death, and yet to take this as a guessing game is to have missed completely the quality of deft poise and high *bizarrerie*—to have missed, one would think, the story's final lines.

Isak Dinesen's is the art of turning puzzles or tricks into significant paradoxes. It is artificial, even arbitrary, in its beginnings, like magic; incantatory images are evoked—a Cardinal named Salviata talking to a lady in black; a master sculptor, condemned to death for treason; two old gentlemen playing piquet "in a small salon next to a ballroom"; a young lady in white walking in a green forest. The stories go on from there; it is as if a painter made a few brilliant, wild strokes on a large canvas, then was faced with the problem of adding the lines and colors, the proportions of forms, to "fill in."

Sometimes a spectator might feel that the painter has left his canvas looking incomplete, unsatisfying, arbitrary, like Picasso's *Demoiselles d'Avignon;* but at other times the forms, no matter how distorted, contrary, fantastic, are proportioned and placed so that they cohere in beauty, as in his *Girl Before a Mirror.* A story like the one entitled "Echoes," involving, among other matters, a diva who has lost her voice, a woman named Eudoxia, and a man who has eaten human flesh, has an aimless quality, though it might have for some readers a subtle, legitimate unity. "The Cardinal's Third Tale," on the other hand, and "Copenhagen Season," go simply and modestly but triumphantly from a beginning to an end.

Isak Dinesen's characters are identified primarily by their trappings, their circumstances—family name, possessions, titles, station, métier, physical appearance; from these their interior life must be inferred—or rather, the emphasis on these trappings gives us all we ask to know about the characters. These persons are generally "larger than life"; they are thus alien to us, striding with great hopes and sorrows and gestures in a world simplified and magnified. This is all they are meant to be, for what is of interest in all tales is primarily that constant concern of one of Eudora Welty's characters: "What next?"

Iask Dinesen writes somewhat in the way a historian writes; events and circumstances are to be named and connected; the motions of the soul are for other kinds of writers. If a Dinesen character should ask, "What is the meaning of life?" it would be rather an event, part of the plot, than a psychological illumination. It is why she calls her writings "tales"; it is why she has one of her characters say, "Where a story-teller is . . . loyal to the story, there, in the end, silence will speak."

Notes of a Russian Putnik

LETTERS OF A RUSSIAN TRAVELER. By N. M. Karamzin. Translated and abridged by Florence Jonas. Introduction by Leon Stilman. Columbia University Press. $5.

By JOHN COURNOS

WE HAVE heard lately a great deal about *Sputnik,* the Russian word for fellow traveler—or satellite. It is much more pleasant — in this instance at least—to hear about *putnik,* which simply means traveler. Nikolai Mikhailovich Karamzin (1766-1826), an early Russian historian, was a young *putnik* at twenty-four, when he began the tour which was to take him through Germany, Switzerland, France and England. The tour, begun in May, 1789, ended in September, 1790—a fateful time for Europe and especially for France.

To obtain the full meed of pleasure in this charming, warmhearted, often ingenuous Diary, the reader had best reserve to the end the reading of the long, well-informed, analytical Introduction by Leon Stilman.

The effect of the narrative—youth, freshness and spontaneity—depends on our entering the spirit of the time and of the young author, a spirit rampant in his day and altogether out of key with ours. The very soul of the book is the portrayal of an attitude to life, and we must make this attitude our own. We must perforce travel along with the author, imbibe of the romance of his time, which now and again deteriorates into sheer sentimental-

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ity, and we must take off our hats to the celebrated poets and philosophers whom he describes with excessive adulation, but most of whom are to us as dead as dodos.

There is a lyrical note in the young Russian's nature which finds an outlet in some refreshing bits of landscape description. At Weimar he chummed up with Wieland and Herder, but missed out on Goethe. He found some recompense in "the wild, gloomy banks of a rushing stream, to the sound of which, while seated on a moss-covered stone, I read the first book of *Fingal.*"

During the early period of the French Revolution Karamzin lived a fairly normal life in Paris, visiting socialites and celebrities. In the royal chapel he observed the King and Queen—the latter he described as "beautiful and stately . . . like a rose which, even when chill winds blow, still retains its freshness and beauty." He was, indeed, a connoisseur of feminine beauty, and through every country that he passed he noted the comeliness of its women. He was quite enamoured of the English women. He wandered about the streets of Dover for two hours "just to feast my eyes on the women of Dover, and I say to every painter, 'If you have not been in England, then your brush has never portrayed perfect beauty.'" It is precisely in England, however, that he exercised—perhaps for the first time—critical faculties absent in his appraisals of Germany, Switzerland and France. And there is a sense of mystification about his final judgment of this country, whose greatest glory, he thought, was Shakespeare. Things in England pleased him, and things horrified him. He defined the national character of the English in a word: morose.

Karamzin lauds travel, which "nourishes the spirit and the heart. Let the hypochondriac travel, that he may cure his hypochondria! Let the misanthrope travel, that he may come to love mankind! Let all travel who are able to!" This is certainly a gay, cheerful travel book. Karamzin was a real *putnik*.

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By DAN WAKEFIELD

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year-old Teddy Boy with a gold earring who is following The Crowd in the espresso house in hopes of finding Truth. His own disillusion is no more profound than the people of the stories that follow—none of which is able to reach his conclusion without at least one use of the word "bore" or a variation of it. It is, in fact, an accomplishment when a character ends a sentence without it.

The old are like Lord Peacehaven, the aging gentleman of the story "Ten Minutes to Twelve," who writes an ultimatum to his business firm that changes must be made or he will resign. "Point 9" of his ultimatum explains that: "Henry Biggs [Company] always dealt in perfect harmony with customers abroad within and without the empire while I was in sole charge. Our customers respected us because we dealt with them in good faith and stood no nonsense. This practice must be reverted to. (They were perfectly satisfied with the tune we played until we started all this business of asking them whether they wanted to hear something else. From now on we shall play 'Rule Britannia' and they will like it.)"

When Lord Peacehaven finishes writing the ultimatum, the nurse comes to take it away, to file with the other papers for the Doctor to read. As Lady Peacehaven explains to the grandchildren, "He's sick in mind."

And the middle-aged? Two couples of that category gather for what turns out to be "A Flat Country Christmas" in a new and rootless neighborhood—a kind of English Levittown—and after being bored silly all evening decide to play the old game of looking in the mirror at Christmas to try to see the future. Ray, one of the husbands, takes the mirror, and stares in it for some time in silence while the others go bravely ahead with the boring conversation. After a while they notice Ray again: "Ray's gaze was blank when he turned to them; only the tears running down his cheeks seemed alive. 'Oh! My God!' he said, 'Oh! My God! I've seen Nothing!"

It's a long way from Mandalay. But that is Mr. Wilson's vision for the people of his modern, shrunken, empire. Mr. Wilson himself is not really angry—he is middle-aged. He is saved from being bored and being boring, however, by his wit. If all else is dead in Jolly Old England, its wit is still vibrantly alive—even perversely inspired by the crumbled traditions all around it. It is, in fact, the last tradition of all, surveying the ruins on every side and kicking the dead warhorses of empire with all the vigor, devotion, and competence that once, on another map, routed the fierce and fearless ranks of the Fuzzy-Wuzzy.

Academic Barbs

THE PASSIONATE SHEPHERD. By Samuel Yellen. Knopf. $3.50.

By WILLIAM DUNLEA

SAMUEL Yellen's stories are known to readers of little magazines such as the *New Mexico Quarterly,* and the *Antioch Review;* in these and several others all but one of these ten stories were first printed. Mr. Yellen has been writing quietly for a couple of decades now, mostly in the short story medium; and he is professor of English at Indiana University, a datum of more than passing note.

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The university locale and aura predominate; yet in a sense the protagonists remain at the periphery of the world scholastic, which merely affords them a position. In some instances, of course, a clean break from the incrustation of modern Academe is sought as if from a hold-fast bog worse than anything fabled of hell. When the seedy professor of the title story takes flight, he seeks to throw off the shroud of anonymity acquired in the caverns of academic routine.

Here an attack is mounted, not at the profession becoming a way as well as a means of life, but at an institution that has come to usurp life, a mechanism like any other contemptuous of personal identity; in other places the mechanism is dealt with as an administrative and social malefactor. Its corrosive effect upon personal relationships is never treated as tellingly here or as tenderly there as one might expect, largely because of a raffish behind-the-drab-ivy-walls intonation present everywhere. In the title story the statement of the problem is shallow and the solution meretricious.

In "Reginald Pomfret Skelton" the rangy reactions of a refugee European professor to an anti-Semitic poison pen are viewed intelligently; then the whole thing is implausibly dropped as a prank. Such compromising with a controversial theme happens to be the rule; it occurs in "The Mystic Presences," which has a similar subject, that of Negro prejudice within the same ambience. These pages bristle with academic barbs, yet they have more bite than taste; here once more the weakness follows from a clever twist by which the rapier is deflected.

The most high-powered piece, "Your Children Will Burn," tries to air too many *bêtes noires,* is punctuated with a gnashing over celebrated clichés of mythopsychiatry, libidinous public relations and manic exurbanization (the story obviously antedates Miltown). However, the writer is as determined as anyone else to get his own return on the clichés, and they are worked over rather luridly. This is a close-up of Jakie Mosskowitz, self-dubbed James Moss, "another Hebe who made good," of his "free-associating" memory and his plain free associating; in fact there is a pedagogic pun on every cliché, and Professor Yellen spreads himself so thin over this piece that professorese and Madison Avenue become interchangeable. The narration frequently teeters over that fine line between the hardboiled and the mawkish. And still, although the cynical tenor saps it of poignancy, the account of childhood tragedy carries depth and power.

Cynicism gets *its* come-uppance in the most vitriolic business of all, "Saturn Has the Power," a heavy teaser with more than a hint of Grand Guignol. The only story with more movement than introspection, "The Four Sides of a Triangle," is also the only untainted success; teeming with the traffic of feuding in-laws, it gains from a jaunty wit and scores with comic buoyancy.

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